

THE BEACON



A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND THE HOME



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MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA.

Mount Vernon, the Home of Washington.

BY WILLIAM DAY.

[The following lines were written on the back of a picture at Mount Vernon.]

There dwelt the Man, the flower of human kind,
Whose visage mild bespoke his nobler mind.

There dwelt the Soldier, who his sword ne'er drew
But in a righteous cause, to Freedom true.

There dwelt the Hero, who ne'er killed for fame,
Yet gained more glory than a Cæsar's name.

There dwelt the Statesman, who, devoid of art,
Gave soundest counsels from an upright heart.

And, O Columbia, by thy sons caressed
There dwelt the father of the realms he blessed;
Who no wish felt to make his mighty praise,
Like other chiefs, the means himself to raise;
But there retiring, breathed in pure renown,
And felt a grandeur that disdained a crown.

I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an "Honest Man." WASHINGTON.

A Fellow-Citizen with Washington.

In an article entitled "The American Miracle," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, a "New American," Mary Antin, relates in a most interesting way her experiences as one of a family of immigrants who came to this country from Russia, the father having crossed the ocean some three years before and earned enough to bring his family to him.

She goes to school for the first time at the age of twelve years, led by her father, who is so impressed with the importance of the occasion that "he would not have delegated that mission to the President of the United States." For herself, she says, "That day I must always remember, even if I live to be so old that I cannot tell my name. To most people their first day at school is a memorable occasion. In my case the importance of the day was a hundred times magnified, on account of the years I had waited, the road I had come, and the conscious ambitions I entertained."

America is to this family a land full of opportunities which are too precious to be wasted, and the keen, Jewish mind of this girl rapidly acquires a knowledge of the English language and absorbs the teachings of the schools. She gives her testimony, as to the length of time it takes to make an American, as follows:—

"By the middle of my second year in school I had reached the sixth grade. When, after the Christmas holidays, we began to

study the life of Washington, running through a summary of the Revolution, and the early days of the Republic, it seemed to me that all my reading and study had been idle until then. The reader, the arithmetic, the song-book, that had so fascinated me until now, turned suddenly into sober exercise books, tools wherewith to hew a way to the source of inspiration. When the teacher read to us out of a big book with many bookmarks in it, I sat rigid with attention in my chair, my hands tightly clasped on the edge of my desk. When the class read, and it came my turn, my voice shook and the book trembled in my hands. I could not pronounce the name of George Washington without a pause. Never had I prayed, never had I chanted the songs of David, never had I called upon the Most Holy, in such utter reverence and worship as I pronounced the simple sentences of my child's story of the patriot. I gazed with admiration at the portraits of George and Martha Washington, till I could see them with my eyes shut. . . .

"I had relatives and friends who were notable people by the old standards, but this George Washington who died long before I was born was like a king in greatness, and he and I were fellow-citizens. There was a great deal about fellow-citizens in the patriotic literature we read at this time; and I knew from my father how he was a citizen, through the process of naturalization, and how I also was a citizen, by virtue of my relation to him. Undoubtedly I

was a fellow-citizen, and George Washington was another. I was thrilled when I realized what sudden greatness had fallen on me; and at the same time I was sobered, as with a sense of responsibility. I strove to conduct myself as befitted a fellow-citizen.

"As I read how the patriots planned the Revolution, and the women gave their sons to die in battle, and the heroes led to victory, and the rejoicing people set up the Republic, it dawned on me gradually what was meant by *my country*. The people all desiring noble things, and striving for them together, defying their oppressors, giving their lives for each other,—all this it was that made *my country*. It was not a thing that I *understood*: I could not go home and tell Fetchke about it, as I told her other things I learned at school. But I knew one could say 'my country' and *feel* it, as one felt 'God' or 'myself.' My teacher, my schoolmates, Miss Dillingham, George Washington himself, could not mean more than I when they said *my country*, after they had once felt it. For the country was for all the citizens, and *I was a citizen*. And, when we stood up to sing 'America,' I shouted the words with all my might. I was in very earnest proclaiming to the world my love for my new-found country:

'I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills.'

Boston Harbor, Crescent Beach, Chelsea Square,—all was hallowed ground to me. As the day approached when the school was to hold exercises in honor of Washington's Birthday, the halls resounded at all hours with the strains of patriotic songs; and I, who was a model of the attentive pupil, more than once lost my place in the lesson, as I strained to hear, through closed doors, some neighboring class rehearsing 'The Star-spangled Banner.' If the doors happened to open, and the chorus broke out unveiled:

'Oh, say, does that Star-spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the
brave?'

delicious tremors ran up and down my spine, and I was faint with suppressed enthusiasm."

For The Beacon.

Skating for a Life.

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

The Randolphs were just seated at the table for supper when the door was swiftly thrown open, and a girl with a shawl gripped tightly around her frightened face came in out of the night.

She explained her errand breathlessly. "O Mr. Randolph, father is dreadfully sick. He's been working in the North Woods, and barely got home. Won't you please come over?"

Mr. Randolph was already rising from the table. "I certainly will, child, right off!" he replied; and, throwing on his heavy coat, he hurried out.

The rest of his family, Mrs. Randolph, Morton, and his two sisters, had barely finished their supper when they heard the sound of his quick returning stride. His face was pale as he entered.

"What is it, father?" Mrs. Randolph asked.

"Pneumonia," he answered, "just as I thought. I can do little to help him. A doctor ought to come from the settlement."

Mrs. Randolph cried out in dismay. "Why, my dear, that's ten miles away! Can't you do something for him without a doctor?"

Mr. Randolph shook his head sadly. "I know a little of medicine, but not enough to keep him from dying. He needs the skilled attention of a physician. I don't know what to do," he added desperately. "His horses and mine are big, heavy fellows, and the road hasn't been broken through for three months. The doctor could get here with his light team if I could get word to him; and I ought to stay with Gregg and do what I can."

Morton rose from his chair. "I know what to do, father! I'll skate down the river to the settlement!"

Mrs. Randolph turned quickly. "Morton, what are you thinking of? You must not go! Why, think of the danger—the air-holes, the long miles, the rapids—the timber wolves! Father, you aren't thinking of letting him go?"

Instead, his thoughtful face showed that he was. Morton rose to his feet, and, as if in answer to some question in his father's mind, stretched his frame and flexed his muscles rigidly. "I'm good for it, Pop—sound as a nut; and I've been skating miles on the river; my racing skates are sharp; I'm ready! How is it?" His voice rang with eagerness.

His father was studying him. "You are sure you can do it?" he asked.

"No, father," Mrs. Randolph interrupted; "just think if he should!"

"It's the facing of trouble and danger that proves our boys, and makes them strong men, my dear," Mr. Randolph said gently. "And over there is a man whose life is going out. I would take any chance to save him, even risking one I love. Get ready, son."

With a yelp of joy Morton jumped for his leggings and light fur coat, after a comforting kiss for his mother. His father gave him matches, and for emergency a strong hook with which to clutch the edge of the ice, should he break through.

Their good-byes followed him as he swung out on to the ice of the river. He looked back at them when some distance away, and waved his mittened hand. He could see his mother in his father's arms. "Poor mother," Morton thought, "she'll be glad to see me back, all right; and she *will*. Half in doing a thing is making up your mind to doing it, father says, and—here goes!"

He changed his short-speed stroke to the long, easy glide of the distance skater. The steel runners bit the ice sharply and rang clearly on the still night air. Ahead of him was a long, dark, dangerous journey: he thrilled as he thought of just what it meant. He must do it alone.

Beyond him the river stretched, white and shining in the moonlight. He could see where logs were imbedded in the ice, but he feared the airholes—places where air had been caught under the ice, leaving only a thin covering which, if skated upon, would break, and plunge him into the chill, black water below. But he made up his mind not to worry, and at the same time to be as careful as possible.

As he glided on, his blood ran faster, and he increased his speed. Ever in his mind was the thought of the tall, kindly friend

of his father, and of himself, who had taught him much of the woodcraft he knew since his father brought them to the Maine woods. He must save Gregg.

Ahead of Morton the river curved sharply. As he turned it, he saw a shadowy object pause and look at him. "Fox!" he exclaimed, and shot forward at full speed.

The startled animal whirled and made for the river bank, and Morton was almost upon it as it slipped and scrambled on the glare ice before it reached the shelter of the thickets.

With a laugh at the discomfort of the fox, he whirled and sped on toward the Big Woods. Out of this dark forest in famine years the big timber wolves came, having worked down, so the trappers said, from far up in the dense woods of Canada. These were what Morton feared.

Around crooks and bends he swept; the glistening river ran before; the dark trees were massed on either side. The ring of his skates against the ice, the creak of his leather leggings, the intake of his breath, were the only sounds; and they made the silence seem even deeper.

As he drew near what was known as Trader's Knoll, he curved far out into the centre of the river. As he did so, he saw three gray ghostly figures looking like huge dogs flash among the dark evergreens on the knoll. His heart jumped. He guessed what they were, and a coldness went over him, chillier than the air. He changed his skating stroke to high speed. He turned to look along the river bank to see where they were following him. His right foot was suddenly jerked back, and he felt himself going down with a crash on the ice. A broken skate, was his first fearful thought. He breathed fast. If it were—he scrambled to his feet. The steel runner was whole. He shot off again, using his fastest stroke, and the white ice blurred under him. Careful not to stumble again, when on a smooth stretch, he looked back, and saw the three gray figures watching him far back on the ice,—they had stopped.

He sighed with relief. "Too slippery for claws—they need skates!" he muttered triumphantly.

One danger was past.

On again he went, using his long-distance stroke. He could hear the faint murmur of the rapids that were coming nearer. He saw there was no hope of skating through them. There were stretches of ice, but everywhere they were cut by the dark, moaning water. He must go around them, after taking off his skates, by means of the bank.

Below the rapids he hesitated just what to do. It had been hard and tedious work scrambling over the icy rocks of the bank, and his strength, already going as a result of the miles he had covered, had been taxed to the limit. He was tempted for a moment to sit down and rest, but again the memory of the sick man and his father's confidence drove him on with no pause. Any moment might be the fatal one for Gregg.

Carefully refastening his skates, he turned out on to the ice again. The skates seemed heavier than before, and the snap and power seemed to have gone from his muscles. A sudden fear clutched him: suppose his strength should fail? He was in a dangerous part of the river, too, where the currents run criss-cross and weaken the ice.

He shut his teeth in determination: he would not be beaten.

It was nervous work, however, and the strain was telling upon him; and, after skat-

ing what seemed to him a long distance below the rapids, he decided he would rest a little. But the moment he sat down the swift drowsiness that came over him startled him, and he jumped up with an effort, vowing he would not pause again until he had reached the settlement.

Rousing himself with a vigorous beating of his arms, and spurring himself forward, he ran a little distance on the toes of his skates to gather headway, whirled out on to the river, and, bending to the left, veered straight down the stream.

C-r-a-c-k—long and shivering! Down—down! He stopped his breath as he did when diving, and the cold water closed over him. Using his hands, he came to the surface with a sobbing gasp. An air-hole—and almost at the end of the journey! For a moment he was panic-stricken, as the icy water bit as if with keen white teeth through his wraps, and the heavy skates, in spite of his kicking, drew him down. Then bump!—he was going under the ice. One hand, thrust out wildly, caught the edge, and he drew himself back with a supreme effort. He remembered the hook in his belt, then, and new courage came. In a moment it was fixed in the ice, and he was safe for the time being.

Waiting for a few moments until he had recovered somewhat from the shock, and telling himself to keep calm, he gripped the hook-handle, and slowly, putting every bit of muscle he had into the effort, thinking first of shaking off his heavy skates, then realizing he would never get to the settlement without them, he worked one knee over the edge of the ice, then with a wrench got the other up. Still keeping a grip on the hook, he shoved himself a little back. There he lay, his head hanging over the dark, seething water, too weak to rise, feeling as if the life had gone out of him, and all he wanted to do was to stay there in the silence and rest.

But again in his mind flamed the meaning of his errand; the thought of his father, his mother, crowded in; and, with effort after effort, he drew himself to his feet. The cold air was freezing his outer garments, and he knew that he must keep in motion or—freeze to death.

He started off stumblingly. One idea was in his mind—to keep going on, just to keep going on. He fixed his eyes on the ice ahead, and put all his will power in the attempt to skate.

As he went on, everything about him seemed to get blurred. Once he knew he fell, though it was all dim how it happened; but, after getting painfully to his feet, he went on, doggedly. Once he wondered dully if he was to go skating on and on and on, and never get anywhere.

After what seemed hours, lights suddenly twinkled in front of him,—the settlement. He turned toward them, skating desperately, knowing, if he fell before getting there, he would never rise, and they never know. He heard voices, his feet caught, and he fell over into something soft and cold. His strength utterly gone.

When he came to himself, he was in a warm room. Rough hands were rubbing his stiff limbs. Some one gave him a warm drink. Gradually his mind cleared. He was in the settlement store, men were grouped around, and in front of him was big, good-natured Dr. Stetson. The sight of him aroused Morton to memory of his errand.

"Doctor, Gregg up the river is mighty sick with pneumonia. I came to tell you," he said.

The doctor whistled and looked grave. "Sanford," he turned to a man standing near, "hitch up the blacks on the light cutter. If you can get down here, lad, on that treacherous old river, I'll go up if I have to go on the tops of the trees. Now, Morton, you need a rest, so stay here until I come back and make another trip. Lucky you yelled when you fell into the snow by the bank, or we would not have found you. I'll tell your father you made good. Probably," the doctor smiled, "he'll be glad to know."

"Yes, but you wait and see how glad mother is," Morton answered, smiling, too.

The best way to teach a virtue is to live it.
PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM.

Self-control.

(A RECITATION.)

First Boy:

Did you ever hear the tempter
With his cunning, wily ways,
That comes to you in dreams at night
And sometimes in your plays?
He says to me: "Come, Jimmie,
Don't you hear the circus din?
There's clowns and dogs and elephants,—
I'll help you to get in."
But I set my foot down firmly
And answered, "No, not I."
For who can't squelch that tempter
If he's man enough to try?

Second Boy:

When the grass feels soft and cool-like
To my hands beneath my head,
And I listen to the bees
That's humming o'er my head,
An odor like green apples
Comes floating o'er the breeze,
And somehow I get up
And peer among the trees;
And then comes recollections
Of not a pleasing kind,
And I turn away triumphant
And leave them all behind.

Third Boy:

Sometimes when I'm a-sittin'
In a cool and shady place,
A-feelin' the nice cool breezes
A-playin' on my face,
A whisper calls me, "Fishin', fishin',"
But Ma had said me, "No,"
So I shake my finger at him
And tell him to lay low.

Fourth Boy:

When I have been a-hoein' corn
Throughout the live-long day,
I sometimes feel as though I'd like
To run away and play;
But then a thought comes to me
That it would not be right,
So I just hoe and hoe and hoe
And thus I win the fight.

Fifth Boy:

When I get tired a-studyin',
Of drawing maps and things,
When through the windows I can hear
The song the robin sings,
A longing creeps into my heart,
And really, I can't see—
But then,—I study spelling
Because it's best for me.



All:

You see that evil tempter
Will always have you do
The thing that is forbid you
If you'll allow him to.
So we just turn upon him
Our backs, and firmly say,
"Get thee behind me, Tempter,"
And he always shrinks away.
LUCY WELTY, in *Normal Instructor*.

For The Beacon.

The Scarlet Humming Bird.

BY H. BEDFORD-JONES.

One of the old, extinct volcanoes, of which there are a great many through the South American Andes, is inhabited by thousands of brilliant red humming-birds. The sides of the ancient crater are steep and dark, and there are no flowers near by, so it seems queer why these honey-loving birds should settle in such a place. The Indians, however, have a tradition which accounts for it very beautifully.

The South American natives believe in a Great Spirit who dwells in the sky and rules everything. He is obeyed by lesser spirits who live in hills or trees or in the elements and direct them. One of these spirits lived inside the big volcano long ago when it was full of fire and lava. His name was Chiriqui.

One day Chiriqui became careless with the power entrusted to him and threw out a great deal of fire and melted lava from his high mountain. The eruption did so much damage and killed so many people that the Great Spirit became very angry, indeed, with Chiriqui for so misusing his power. He called out in a deep, rumbling voice that shook all the mountains, and commanded Chiriqui to let all the fire and lava sink away down into the earth, and to let the volcano be dead and cold for ever after.

Chiriqui was sorry for what he had done, of course; but, in spite of all his pleading and promises, the Great Spirit would not

trust him with the terrible lava and ashes any more.

"Grant me, then, one thing, Great Spirit!" cried Chiriqui, as he slowly prepared to obey the order. "Let me keep just one tiny flame to warm me and to lighten up my dark mountain. Leave me only a spark, Great Spirit!"

But the Great Spirit did not answer a single word. Nevertheless, Chiriqui obeyed him, and the molten lava and sulphurous fires began to sink away into the earth. Finally Chiriqui had an idea, realizing that he must show the Great Spirit that he was really sorry for what he had done. So he sent to another spirit in the clouds who controlled the rain, and he persuaded him to visit the poor people whose crops and homes had been destroyed. The rain-spirit did this, and soon the crops were growing again and the corn came up nice and green, while inside the volcano the fires sank lower and lower, and poor Chiriqui was very unhappy.

The Great Spirit had not answered him yet, and finally there was just one tiny speck of fire left in the very bottom of the big crater. Chiriqui was just about to crush it down into the earth forever when he was amazed to see it suddenly spring up and fly past him! It had been changed into a humming-bird, and then Chiriqui realized that the Great Spirit had granted his request because of his effort to repair the damage he had done.

And ever since then the dark old volcano has been filled with these "fire-birds," as the Indians call them. Their nests are all about the gloomy walls, and they dart about like thousands of streaks of tiny flame all around the extinct volcano of Chiriqui.

For The Beacon.

The Story of a Stream.

BY CHARLES W. CASSON.

A few miles from Salt Lake City, in Utah, is a little stream. In some ways it is just like a thousand other little streams that rush down the hillsides in their merry way, like boys and girls coming out of the school gate when school is over.

It comes from a spring away up on a mountain, just like the other streams of which I speak. For many years it ran along like other streams, in just the same free and easy, happy way. In certain places it formed wide, deep pools, and at others it dashed down a hundred feet like the rain-drops on a steep roof.

But by and by something happened which changed it, and made it worthy of being written about in *The Beacon*. Some men living near realized that, while the stream was very beautiful, it might be made of very much more use. They saw the possibility of its doing a great deal more good than merely laughing itself down into the great salt sea.

So they built, away up on the mountain, a strong steel tube big enough to catch and hold the little stream. For miles they built it, until it stretched like a huge snake along the mountain side.

At the bottom of the tube machinery was built so that the water would turn wheels and create electric power. And, when the little stream rushed down the tube, it was able to send out into the city a few miles away the electric current that gave light and heat and power to the people.

And many a great machine that throbbed away in the factory sang its hoarse song of gratitude to the little stream. And the people who walked at night by the light of the electric street lamps were able to see just because the little stream gave itself to the work of the tube.

But this was not the only work done by the stream. After it had left the power-house, where it turned the great wheels, it flowed out upon a stretch of land that had been so dry that nothing would ever grow upon it.

There are three thousand acres of land that were once as barren as a sand heap that now are covered with fruit trees and grain because of the aid given by the water of the stream. It has just transformed them from a waste of dryness to a garden of beauty.

I wonder if you do not know why I have told you about this stream? It is so easy to read the lesson that it teaches every one of us. The stream is a sermon to us all, and it will be best for us to hear what it has to say.

There are so many of us who are living happy, care-free lives, just as merry as the stream on the mountain, without really trying to do any good with the power we have. All we think of is to have a good time.

But we need to remember how much good a smile will do to other people. There are many people into whose lives we could bring joy and light and love, if we allowed ourselves to go into the tube of duty.

A smile is an oasis in the desert. Love changes any wilderness into a garden. Kindness enables other people to do good that they could not have done without it.

We are all human streams, rushing down the hillsides of life. Shall we not do all the good we can? Shall we not create light and love and happiness? Will you?

Friends, in this world of hurry,
And work, and sudden end,
If a thought comes quick of doing
A kindness to a friend,

Do it that very minute! Don't put it off—
don't wait.

What's the use of doing a kindness, if you
do it a day too late?

The Girls' Calendar.

I would rather plant a single acorn that will make an oak of a century and a forest of a thousand years than sow a thousand morning-glories that give joy for a day and are gone to-morrow. For the same reason I would rather plant one living truth in the heart of a child that will multiply through the ages than scatter a thousand brilliant conceits before a great audience that will flash like sparks for an instant, and like sparks disappear forever. EDWARD LEIGH PELL.

Washington was commanded to organize a nation. We are commanded to organize the world.
EDWIN D. MEAD.

The closing exercises began with the displaying of a portrait of George Washington. "Who is this?" the teacher asked.

The children sat mute and unresponsive, till finally one little fellow piped up.

"I know who it is," he shouted. "We got that picture at home. Mamma told me who it is." He swelled with pride. "It's our father from the country," he said.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA XXXVII.

I am composed of 18 letters.

My 4, 5, 9, 15, 8, is one of the latest novels.

My 12, 10, 2, 16, is what some people live in.

My 3, 11, 14, is a beam of light.

My 1, 6, 7, 17, is a fog.

My 18, 13, 16, is what we do every day.

My whole was a great friend of Washington.

JOYCE BREMAN.

ENIGMA XXXVIII.

I am composed of 12 letters.

My 12, 11, 9, is the ocean.

My 10, 3, 2, is a metal.

My 8, 5, 6, is a boy's name.

My 7, 1, 3, 4, is something a boy wears.

My whole is a great country.

LAWRENCE KENNISON.

A HALF-SQUARE.

1. A boy's name.
2. A body of water.
3. A quantity of paper.
4. Stops the flow of water.
5. A preposition.
6. A consonant.

GORDON ATWOOD.

A CHARADE.

My first is soft and damp and green.

My second at the top of an arch is seen.

My third, when you know it, you'll surely agree

That there are ten of these on you and me.

My whole's a very little thing,

You'll often hear it sweetly sing.

MARGARET ROSEBRUGH.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

First in cab, but not in cart;

Second in stag, as well as in hart;

Third in gray, but not in blue;

Fourth in color, but not in hue;

Fifth in cream, but not in milk;

Sixth in lama, as well as in silk;

Seventh in Don, but not in Neva;

Eighth in Jane, but not in Eva;

Last I think you'll find in beaver;

The letters put by you aright,

A Spanish town will bring to sight.

Young Days.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 19.

ENIGMA XXXIII.—Alexander Agassiz.

ENIGMA XXXIV.—The Boston Herald.

A DICKENS STORY.—1. Nicholas Nickleby. 2. Our Mutual Friend. 3. Martin Chuzzlewit. 4. Great Expectations. 5. Old Curiosity Shop. 6. Little Dorrit. 7. A Tale of Two Cities. 8. Pickwick Papers. 9. A Child's History of England. 10. Hard Times. 11. Dombey and Son. 12. David Copperfield. 13. Bleak House. 14. Barnaby Rudge. 15. Cricket on the Hearth. 16. Uncommercial Traveller. 17. Chimes. 18. A Christmas Carol. 19. Oliver Twist. 20. The Battle of Life.

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